

helping me proclaim August 2, 2003 as farm-worker Appreciation Day. We thank them for all they have done and wish them the very best for the future.

**VETERANS HEALTH CARE  
IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2003**

SPEECH OF

**HON. RAHM EMANUEL**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 21, 2003*

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2357, the "Veterans Health Care Improvement Act." This bill will bestow Filipino veterans with the honor and dignity they deserve for their service in the Pacific theatre of World War II.

Filipino soldiers fought shoulder-to-shoulder and died alongside American troops at some of the war's most horrific battles like Bataan and Corregidor. During the infamous Bataan Death March, Filipino soldiers swelled the ranks of the dead to over six thousand. Yet for all their sacrifices, Congress in 1946 divested Filipino soldiers of their military benefits while soldiers of other allied countries retained their status and privileges as American veterans. It is long past time to reverse that injustice by enacting this legislation.

H.R. 2357 will restore veterans' status to the 14,000 permanent legal residents who are Filipino veterans of World War II. This will go a long way to provide comfort and security to them in their twilight years. For those suffering service-connected illnesses and injuries, Filipino veterans will finally receive the right to medical care they earned so long ago. The most elderly veterans will be granted urgently needed nursing home care.

Mr. Speaker, young Filipino men responded to the call of duty over sixty years ago and fought valiantly under the American flag. Now toward the end of their lives, they deserve to benefit from the values that the American flag represents. To that end, I stand in strong and proud support for H.R. 2357.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004**

SPEECH OF

**HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 17, 2003*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2691) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the DeFazio-Bradley amendment to strike the Mr. Recreational Fee Demonstration program from the Interior Appropriations bill. This program is punitive, unfair, and mismanaged.

The Recreation Fee Demonstration program allows the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Serv-

ice, and the National Park Service to charge citizens to recreate on public land, including primitive trails and unimproved campgrounds. I believe—as do many of my constituents who hike and picnic in the Angeles National Forest in Southern California—that it is patently unfair to charge them a fee to hike or picnic in these undeveloped public lands that they already support with their tax dollars.

The GAO has recently found evidence of serious mismanagement of the Recreation Fee program. Only 50 cents of every dollar collected is actually used to maintain or improve our public lands. This mismanagement is unacceptable, and we must not allow it to continue.

Let me be clear that I strongly support the National Park System, and users have already paid fees for use of National Parks, as well as developed campsites, boat launches, and other developed areas. Evidence shows that the National Park Service has a much more impressive track record in utilizing its program fees towards maintenance backlogs in national parks.

Nonetheless, we must not allow the Recreation Fee Demonstration program to continue without enhanced Congressional oversight. I urge my colleagues to support the DeFazio-Bradley amendment to strike this wasteful program.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. JENNIFER DUNN**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 23, 2003*

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, July 22, 2003, I was unable to be present for rollcall votes No. 401 and No. 402 because I was unavoidably detained. Had I been here, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall No. 401 and rollcall No. 402.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. JIM SAXTON**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 23, 2003*

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to explain my absence for rollcall number 401. During the vote, I was at the U.S. Department of State attending a swearing-in ceremony for Ambassador Eric Edelman, the new U.S. Ambassador to Turkey. After having the chance to work with Ambassador Edelman during his tenure with the Vice President, I wanted to personally extend my congratulations and express my appreciation for his long-standing service to our country.

However, had I been present for the vote, I would have voted "aye".

**EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES THERE  
SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED A NA-  
TIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH  
CENTER WEEK**

SPEECH OF

**HON. DANNY K. DAVIS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 21, 2003*

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the proud sponsor of this resolution to establish a National Community Health Center Week. As we have discussed prescription drugs for our seniors on the House floor, some of the main points of discussion have been issues like affordability, accessibility and who is being served. Just as the bill that was passed last Congress and this Congress, there will be individuals that can not afford their prescriptions or some that will just not have access to them. Fortunately, I know that there are Community Health Centers available throughout the nation to help those in need or who get displaced by health care legislation. Community health centers have become the safety net within the health care system caring for 1 of every 5 low-income babies born in America, 1 of every 8 uninsured individuals, 1 of every 9 Medicaid beneficiaries, 1 of every 9 persons of color, 1 of every 10 rural Americans, almost 750,000 homeless and nearly 850,000 farm workers. Community health centers are established in almost every corner of our nation, representing every aspect of any Congressional district—whether it be assisting the working poor in the inner city or in the rural farmland, migrant workers, or even those who have insurance but do not have access to any other health facilities.

These health centers provide high-quality, cost effective health care as they continually meet escalating health needs and assist in reducing health disparities as well as adapting to the changing nation. With the weakened economy and unemployment reaching its highest point in almost a decade, our nation's health centers are feeling and will continue to feel the consequences by an increasing volume of patients, especially the uninsured. By establishing a week to raise awareness of community health centers, we will also be highlighting each year the great accomplishments these nonprofit, community owned and operated health providers offer so many communities. With recent numbers indicating that the nation's uninsured population is even higher than once thought, at a startling 60 million, if our nation will not realize the need for universal health care, we need to realize the importance and the need to better fund our community health centers.

One of the most amazing aspects of the community health centers is the involvement of the community. Each center tailors their services to best meet the needs and priorities of the communities of which they are in. Citizens in these communities become active participants in their community's health care decision making. Health centers even provide approximately 60,000 jobs to the residents in the communities of the centers.

Mr. Speaker, community health centers are the safety net that are committed to serving all individuals with the mission that everyone deserves quality health care services regardless